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EUR/NCE FOR WILLIAM SILKWORTH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/28/2016

TAGS: NATO MARR MOPS PGOV PREL RO IZ  
SUBJECT: ROMANIA -- INITIAL RESPONSE ON SUPPORT FOR

MILITARY ADVISORY AND LIAISON TEAM (MALT) FOR NTM-I FOCE PROTECTION

REF: STATE 46631

Classified By: CDA Mark Taplin for Reasons 1.4 (a), (b) and d)

¶1. (C) Further to Reftel, PolMilOff discusse with MFA NATO Division Director Mirela Maghiar arch 28 a possible Romanian contribution to a seen-man Military Advisory and Liaison Team (MALT). The MALT would certify and mentor the Iraqi Bas Defense Unit (IBDU) taking over guard responsibilities at Ar-Rustamiyah, the site of the training facilities used by the NATO Training Mission in Iraq (NTM-I), and would act as IBDU's liaison with the NTM-I. PolMilOff expressed appreciation for Romania's substantial ongoing contributions in Iraq, adding that it was not necessary for Romania to fill all the MALT positions, since NTM-I expects a multinational MALT contingent. PolMilOff stressed the importance of a rapid GOR decision since the MALT must be in-theater by April 30 to certify the IBDU.

¶2. (C) Maghiar stated that the GOR understood that it should make a decision promptly and observed that "the building of a MALT team is important for NTM-I and for ensuring its protection by Iraqi forces by July." She continued that the increased role of Iraqi security forces demonstrated progress in developing Iraqi capabilities. Although Romania "understands the importance" of establishing a MALT and has been "fully attentive to cooperating with the U.S. on issues related to Iraq," she expressed the "personal and preliminary opinion that it will be very difficult" for Romania to contribute to a MALT. She specifically cited the "sensitivity of Romanian public opinion" toward sending more troops to a "dangerous mission" in Iraq. She underscored that "Romanians see other countries withdrawing their forces from Iraq," so it would be difficult to garner support for additional, even modest, troop contributions to Iraq. Nonetheless, she promised to share our points within the MFA and with the Defense Ministry.

¶3. (C) Comment. Despite limited resources, Romania continues to demonstrate a willingness to go the extra mile on a number of fronts. For example, earlier this month Romania deployed a battalion to Kosovo and 23 persons from the presidential guard force will deploy soon to Afghanistan and Sudan to provide force protection for senior UN staff. MFA and political party sources have told us that the Romanian parliament will debate, possibly as early as next week, ratification of the defense cooperation agreement

between the U.S. and Romania, which will permit U.S. forces to use Romanian military facilities. Although our sources confidently predict ratification, they also foresee a debate on the floor of parliament. While Romania's commitment to maintain its troop presence in Iraq remains firm, as underscored by President Traian Basescu and senior GOR officials both publicly and privately, this does not mean that Romanian policy makers are eager to focus the public's attention on Iraq at this time, even via a modest contribution to a MALT. Recent media reports have noted the March 25 death, by suicide, of a Romanian soldier in Iraq, Romania's first fatality in Iraq. End Comment.

**¶4.** (U) AmEmbassy Bucharest's reporting telegrams are available on the Bucharest SIPRNet website:  
[www.state.sgov.gov/eur/Bucharest](http://www.state.sgov.gov/eur/Bucharest)  
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